

Veterinary Public Health and Rabies Control Dog Bite Prevention



Mission and Vision

- **Vision:** All residents of Los Angeles County are protected from zoonoses and animals are free of reportable animal diseases.
- **Mission:** To protect the health and well-being of the residents of Los Angeles County by surveillance and control of zoonoses and all reportable animal diseases which affect animal of commercial importance, and to enforce applicable laws and ordinances.



Veterinary Public Health and Rabies Control



1. Enforcement of County and State rabies and animal health laws
2. Animal disease surveillance and outbreak investigations
3. Coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies
4. Develop outreach tools for community education



Dog Bite Facts

- Dog bites are largely preventable.
- About 80% of the animal bites are received from dogs.
- Over 4.7 million people a year in the US suffer from dog bites.
- Dog bites account for about 75% of bite injuries treated in emergency rooms.
- Studies show that children under the age of 10 and seniors are at higher risk for dog bites.



Laws



By law, all animal bites to humans must be reported to the local health officer. The local health officer must investigate the bites to determine the potential risk of rabies.



Laws (Continued)

- With over 50 percent of the bites occurring on the dog owner's property, the issue is a major source of concern for insurers.
- Over the years, many states have passed laws with stiff penalties for owners of dogs that cause serious injuries or deaths. Owners are held accountable for their dogs.



Where do dog bites occur?



- Over 50% of the bites occur on the dog owner's property.
- 77% of the dog bites belong to the victim's family or a friend.



Small Children

- When a child less than 4 years old is the victim, the family dog was the attacker half the time.
- 9 times out of 10, the attack happened in the family home.



Dog Attack Victim



Most dog bite victims are children



Most dogs will bite if provoked



Generally dog bites are inflicted by family pets



Why do some dogs bite?



- Lack of training and socialization.
- Some behaviors in children, especially young children can frighten dogs.
- Screaming and running can be mistaken by dogs as sounds and signals given by prey.
- Some children tend to play aggressive games with dogs, such as wrestling or tug of war.



Who's Being Bitten?

- Children make up more than 60 percent of all dog bite victims.
- Half of all children 12 and younger have been bitten by a dog.
- The elderly are the next age group at high risk for dog bites.
- Home service people like mail carriers and meter readers are frequent dog bite victims.



Data from Some Los Angeles County Emergency Departments

Emergency Department Visits for Dog Bites where Latinos represented over 78% of the bite victims in 2005-2006

Hospital Name	Location	Total # ED Visits for Dog Bite	# ED Latino Visits for Dog Bite	% Among Latinos
Greater El Monte Community	El Monte	122	104	85.2%
Pacifica of the Valley	Sun Valley	172	144	83.7%
Beverly	Montebello	174	136	78.2%



How to Avoid Being Bitten

- Be cautious around strange dogs and treat your own pet with respect
- Never leave a baby or small child alone with a dog
- Be on the lookout for potentially dangerous situations
- Teach young children to be careful around pets



How to Avoid Being Bitten

- Children must be taught NOT to approach strange dogs. Children should be taught to ask permission from a dog's owner before petting the dog.



- Don't run past a dog. Dogs naturally love to chase and catch things. Don't give them a reason to become excited or aggressive. Never disturb a dog that's caring for puppies, sleeping or eating.



How to Avoid being Bitten

- If a dog approaches to sniff you - stay still. In most cases, the dog will go away when it determines you're not a threat.
- If you're threatened by a dog, remain calm. Don't scream. If you say anything, speak calmly and firmly. Avoid eye contact. Try to stay still until the dog leaves, or back away slowly until the dog is out of sight. Don't turn and run.
- If you fall or are knocked to the ground, curl into a ball with your hands over your head and neck. Protect your face.



Dog Owners Responsibilities

- **Carefully consider your pet selection.** Puppies should not be obtained on impulse. Before and after selection, your veterinarian is the best source for information about behavior and suitability.
- **Make sure your pet is socialized** as a young puppy so it feels at ease around people and other animals. Gradually expose your puppy to a variety of situations under controlled circumstances; continue that exposure on a regular basis as your dog gets older. Don't put your dog in a position where it feels threatened or teased.



Dog Owners Responsibilities

- **Wait until your child is older.** Because so many dog bites happen to young children, it is suggested that parents wait to get a dog until their children are older than 4 years of age.
- **Train your dog.** The basic commands “sit,” “stay,” “no,” and “come” can be incorporated into fun activities which build a bond of obedience and trust between pets and people. Avoid highly excitable games like wrestling or tug-of-war. Use a leash in public to control your dog.



Dog Owners Responsibilities

- **Keep your dog healthy.** Have your dog vaccinated against rabies and preventable infectious diseases. Parasite control and other health care is important because how your dog feels directly affects how it behaves.
- **Be a responsible pet owner.** License your dog with the community as required. Obey leash laws. Dogs are social animals; spending time with your pet is important. Dogs that are frequently left alone have a greater chance of developing behavior problems.
- **Neuter your pet.** It's a fact: neutered dogs are 3 times less likely to bite.



Why do people have pets?

- Millions of residents have pets as their companions.
- Most children view their pets as their “Special Friend.”
- Caring for pets often helps improve an owner’s psychological health.
- Pet ownership often help owners stay more physically active.
- Pets help the elderly ward off loneliness.



Why do people have pets?

- The presence of a companion animal will lower a person's blood pressure.
- Pet owners have a higher one-year survival rate following coronary heart disease.
- Within six months of receiving a service dog, people with disabilities needed about 70% fewer house of home aids.
- Service dogs help disabled people make friends and gain an enhanced feeling of well-being and independence.

Source: Delta Society



Partnerships

Dog bite prevention needs to be a group effort to be effective.



For More Information



[Dog Bite Prevention](#) (from AVMA)



[Saving your pets in disasters](#) (AVMA)



[Animal Health Brochures](#) (AVMA)



[Coloring books, comics for kids](#) (AVMA)



E
N
D

